



Senate Press Office

201 Paul D. Coverdell Legislative Office Building
18 Capitol Square
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
404.656.0028 or outside the Atlanta area 800.282.5803

PRESS RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

It's Time For Scholarships For Children In Failing Schools

ATLANTA – Hold on children. Help is on the way!

Almost 53,000 children in a single County in Georgia are on the verge of having their future threatened by the inappropriate actions of their Board of Education. If the Clayton County Schools lose their accreditation, there will be no Pre-K funds or HOPE Scholarships available for the children. Transcripts will be invalid. College applications will be thrown in the trash. This is a disaster.

The State Constitution mandates that schools are under the jurisdiction of locally elected school boards. That prevents the Governor or the State Department of Education from moving in – even temporarily – with new management. So, unless the Board members resign and new elections take place and they dramatically change their ways, the children are penalized. It's unfair.

The State Senate is considering a lifeline for the parents of these children. SB 458 would require that the state funding for each child be offered to the parents as a scholarship that can be used to transfer the child to any public or private school that will accept the student. We estimate that the scholarship will be worth about \$4,125 in Clayton County. That will cover a significant portion of private school tuition.

Clayton's children aren't the only ones being placed at risk by poorly run school administrators. There are 19 schools in Georgia that have been on the "Needs Improvement" list for 7 or 8 years in a row. It is time to admit that the children in the schools need help and the time for excuses has run out. SB 458 would also require scholarships be offered to these children as well.



Some say this violates the principle of local control. But, if the local elected officials have clearly failed in their duties, real local control should shift to the parents. This is their money. These are their children. And they should have the right to choose the best educational environment for your child – particularly when the system has clearly failed.

If the Titanic was sinking and there weren't enough lifeboats, we would put the children in them first. Save the children and then worry about who hit the iceberg!

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Sen. Eric Johnson of the 1st serves as the Senate President Pro Tempore. He represents Bryan County and portions of Chatham and Liberty counties. He may be reached at 404.656.5109 or via e-mail at eric.johnson@senate.ga.gov.